

Dagens Nyheter, 13 June 1980

"Bergling Would Be Exchanged for Raoul Wallenberg: 'Clear Overstep Which the Parliament Should Investigate'"

"A clear overstepping of the boundaries which should be investigated by the Parliament's constitutional committee."

These are the comments of a highly placed legal source of DN regarding the Folk Party's offer last September to the Soviets to exchange Stig Bergling, who was only under suspicion of espionage, for Raoul Wallenberg, Swedish diplomat, who disappeared in 1945.

The then foreign minister, Hans Blix, was the main person behind the idea. In a communiqué issued by the Foreign Department on Thursday, however, it was pointed out that the government supported the idea, or rather that the entire government with Ole Ulsten at its head was in on the plan.

According to the official version, Stig Bergling's lawyer at that time, Ragnar Gottfarb, went to the Foreign Department and said that Stig Bergling could imagine himself being exchanged for Raoul Wallenberg. Then the government began sending out feelers to find out if the Soviet Union was interested. The Soviets were not at all interested. This was confirmed by Hans Blix on Thursday. The Foreign Department is quick to emphasize that there were no direct negotiations regarding an exchange.

On Thursday, Hans Blix did not want to discuss how the contacts with Moscow and Bergling were arranged. "Such exchanges between the Soviet Union and other countries have occurred at other times and we do not want to rule out the possibility of having Wallenberg released," said Blix in an Eke interview.

Blix did not want to comment on the fact that Bergling, at the time of a possible exchange, would have been turned over to the Soviet Union before he had been tried on charges of espionage in Sweden.

"But if an exchange had occurred, a lot of conditions would have had to be met first," he said.

Dagens Nyheter spoke to several prominent lawyers who do not want to give their names. They believe that the whole affair is extremely remarkable and "brings with it many judicial problems." It goes against Swedish legal usage.

They state that it is "unpleasant since we usually don't use people as a commodity."

The exchange of spies belongs to big power plays. "The big powers have created an almost normal order of things by settling the execution of sentences of individuals who have been convicted."

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Bergling exchange...

What is dubious is that Sweden was willing to exchange a person who is only under suspicion, not convicted, of a crime.

"This goes against the basic principle that a person is innocent until proven guilty. Bergling was not a spy at the time of the sounding-out regarding a possible exchange."

It is also surprising that the government, according to unconfirmed sources, would have been willing to drop the entire espionage investigation.

"Strange because it is in the nation's interests to rectify the security aspects, find out what damage the country suffered as a result of the activities of the suspect."

It is further pointed out that "the Raoul Wallenberg case is so special that it would be convenient to such drastic things." On the other hand, an exchange could lead to the interpretation that Raoul Wallenberg, who saved the lives of many Hungarian Jews, was a spy.

Hilding Johansson, vice-chairman of the Parliament's constitutional committee, does not want to comment on the Bergling case but points out that the committee submitted critical views of different cabinet ministers. He also points out that most matters are taken up by the committee on their own initiative.

Kam Eneberg

The Red Cross' board of directors decided on Thursday to nominate Raoul Wallenberg as the recipient of The European Council's newly established prize for the defense of human rights, "European Human Rights' Prize."

The prize, which will be awarded for the first time on the 30th anniversary of the signing of the European convention for human rights, goes to single individuals or organizations which work actively for the promotion of human rights. In the future, the prize will be awarded every third year.